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Ueber Bildung von Knabenstimmen.

(By Albert Lohmann.)

(Schluss.)

In dieser Rücksicht halten wir es für das Allerwichtigste, dass man sich bei den Knaben vorzüglich mit der Entwicklung der Kopfstimme beschäftige. Es wird überflüssig sein, den Kindern den Unterschied zwischen Kopf- und Bruststimme theoretisch klar zu machen; man verfähre vielmehr praktisch etwa also: Man lasse von einem die Tonleiter etwa von *f* zu *f*^{*} singen und mache dann den Sänger und die anderen aufmerksam: siehe, die höchsten Töne von diesen 8 hast du bei Weitem nicht so laut und kräftig singen können, wie die tiefen; du hast die höchsten eben mit der feinen Stimme, mit der Kopfstimme, gesungen. Dieses feine Stimmchen müsst ihr viel gebrauchen, auch bei den tieferen Tönen noch, die ihr mit der gröberen Stimme singen könntet. Versucht es einmal, ganz leise von oben herunter zu singen. Jetzt lasse man den hohen Ton *f* *piano* ansingen (wir stellen uns Knaben von 9—13 Jahren vor) und die Töne der *scala* ganz leise heruntergleiten, so wird man bemerken, wie die Kinder dann die Kopfstimme bis *a* herunter gebrauchen können und dort erst der Wechsel der Register eintritt. Als Regel wird man bei den noch gesanglich ungeschulten Kindern finden, dass sie beim Singen der *Ton-Scala* ein Register so lange gebrauchen, als es geht, deswegen ist es empfehlenswerth, auf den Tönen der Kopfstimme anzusetzen und dann herunter singen zu lassen, um das Kopfregister so weit wie möglich in die Lage der Bruststimme herunterzuziehen. Ein anderer schwieriger Punkt ist der Ausgleich der Stimmregister, so dass der durch eine Octav hindurch gesungene Laut *a* auf allen Stufen dieselbe Färbung, dieselbe Klarheit und Rundung besitzt. Um einen solch schönen Ausgleich zu bekommen, lasse man die Tonleiter bis zur Quinte singen, erst von *c—g* und umgekehrt, dann einen Ton höher von *d—a* und zurück und so weiter bis zum hohen *f*. Setzt man diese Uebung beständig fort, so wird man in dieser Hinsicht bald die erfreulichsten Resultate erzielen. Ueberhaupt ist das Singen der *scala* von der grössten Bedeutung, weil man dabei am allerleichtesten und verständlichsten die Kinder auf die Fehler aufmerksam machen

kann. "Sind diese Uebungen zur Erlangung eines leichten Ueberganges vom Kopf- zum Brustton aufgeführt worden, so fasse man das Anschwellen des einzelnen Tones in's Auge, welches *piano* mit weit geöffnetem Munde anfangen und bis zum *fortissimo* mit vollständig offenem Munde und ruhiger Zungenlage abwachsen muss, um zuletzt wieder als *piano*-Ton zu endigen. Dabei muss das Ohr sich mit dem Heraushorchen des besten, edelsten, metallreichsten Klanges angelegentlich beschäftigen." (Wiener Blätter für kathol. Kirchenmusik.)

Diese Uebungen bilden die Grundlage für das *Crescendo* und *Diminuendo* oder für die Dynamik im Gesangsvortrag. Wie bei einem Gemälde Licht und Schatten sich vertheilen, so verlangen die Gesetze des musikalischen Vortrages, dass sich in ihm durch *forte* und *piano* bestimmte Stellen herausheben oder zurücktreten, dass durch Wachsen und Abnehmen der Töne und ganzer Tonpassagen die Composition Leben bekommt. Gerade dadurch erhält der Gesang seinen grössten Reiz, Kraft und Innigkeit des Ausdrucks.

Mit diesen kurzen Bemerkungen, welche aus der Erfahrung einer vieljährigen Beschäftigung in einem grossen Knabenchor geschöpft sind, haben unseres Erachtens angehende Dirigenten praktische Winke genug, ihren Chor zu einer vollendeten Technik zu bringen und wollen wir uns nur noch den Wunsch erlauben, es möchten auch Andere diesen wichtigen Punkt in unseren musikalischen Blättern besprechen.

P. Höveler (Gr. Bl.)

Winke fuer Gesangproben.

Wenn die Aufführungen mancher Chöre trotz vieler und meist recht mühsamer Proben dennoch oft misslingen oder doch wenigstens weit von jener Vollkommenheit entfernt bleiben, welche dem Zweck des Kirchengesanges entspricht, so liegt die Schuld gewöhnlich an mangelhafter Vorbereitung in den Proben. Schlechte Proben hindern die Veredlung des Kirchengesanges statt dieselbe zu fördern. Allerdings liegt die Schuld oft weniger an den Sängern als an dem Dirigenten, der in erster Linie ein Freund der Proben und theoretisch und praktisch hinreichend gebildet sein muss, um sowohl in der Auswahl der Compositionen als auch in deren

Einübung das Richtige treffen zu können; die vielen Missgriffe in dieser Beziehung beweisen, wie schlimm es um die Befähigung mancher Dirigenten bestellt ist. — Sehr nützliche pädagogische Winke für die Abhaltung von Proben gab der Hochw. Hr. J. Bischoff, Diözesanpräses der St. Gallischen Cäcilien-Vereins in seiner Rede bei der Generalversammlung des "Allg. deutschen Cäcilien-Vereins in Mainz." Der Hochw. Herr sagt zwar in der Einleitung, er sei nicht Musiker von Beruf, und sähe die ihm gestellte Frage *"Wie sollen Gesangsproben sich gestalten, um in denselben die Zwecke der Veredlung und Förderung des Kirchengesanges am besten zu erreichen"* lieber von einem Fachmann gelöst. Die Leser werden aber zur Ueberzeugung gelangen, dass der Redner ein Mann von *praktischen Erfahrungen* ist, und die sind gerade in dieser Frage von grösster Wichtigkeit.

"Die verständige, kluge und eifrige Leitung der Gesangsproben ist von der höchsten Bedeutung. Von ihr hängt zum grössten Theil der Bestand eines Chores und der Erfolg im Kirchengesang ab. Die gute Leitung ist nicht ohne grosse Schwierigkeit. Sie erfordert nicht bloss musikalische Kenntnisse, sondern auch praktischen Sinn, den richtigen pädagogischen Takt, Klugheit und Menschenkenntniss.

Bei den Chormitgliedern ist es meistens nicht die Besoldung, sondern der gute Wille und Opfersinn. Zeit und Mittel sind meist karg zugemessen, das Ziel, das erreicht werden soll, ein hohes und heiliges. In Betracht dieser Umstände stelle ich an die Gesangsproben besonders folgende Anforderung; sie müssen 1. anziehend, 2. instruktiv, 3. erbauend sein.

Durch Ersteres werden die Sänger für die Proben, durch das Zweite für die Kunst und durch das Dritte für die Kirche gewonnen.

1. Für die Kirchengesangsproben sind die Sänger meistens nur Sonntags, oder an Werktagabenden d. h. in jenen Stunden zu haben, die sonst der Erholung gewidmet sind. Es ist daher ein nicht zu unterschätzendes Opfer, das sie durch den Besuch der Gesangsproben bringen, zu welchen für Manche ein weiter und beschwerlicher Weg bei der Nachtzeit führt. Desto mehr muss es daher dem Director daran gelegen sein, die Gesangsstunde möglichst anziehend zu machen, so dass sie nach den Mühen des Tages eine Erquickung und Hebung für Geist und Herz bietet.

Schon das Probeklokal soll, so weit es immer möglich, wohl eingerichtet, geräumig und freundlich sein. Die Temperatur sei gemässigt, so dass nicht Frost, noch viel weniger Erhitzung, die für Sänger sehr nachtheilig ist, erfolgt. Reine, frische Luft ist unumgänglich

nothwendig, daher auch Blumenduft, Ofendampf oder Tabakrauch fern zu halten. Die Notenpulte sollen in genügender Zahl vorhanden, der Grösse der Sänger entsprechend und in zweckdienlicher Ordnung aufgestellt sein. Sehr zu wünschen sind Sitzbänke längs den Wänden angebracht den Sängern zur kurzen Ruh in den Pausen. Unentbehrlich ist eine gute Beleuchtung, die es den Sängern ermöglicht, in guter Aufstellung und ungezwungener Körperhaltung die Noten lesen zu können. — Anhäufung von Möbeln, überladene Dekoration der Wände mit Tableau's oder Vorhängen ist der Akustik nachtheilig und erschwert den Gesang. Ebenso wirkt sehr störend alles Geräusch (Vögelgesang, Pendelschlag, u. s. w.) in oder um das Lokal. Vollständige Ruhe und Geräuschlosigkeit ist für die reine Intonation, gleichmässige Tonhaltung und genaue Beachtung des Taktes nothwendig.

Wie das Zimmer, ja noch mehr muss das Antlitz und das Benehmen des Direktors ein freundliches und einnehmendes sein. Allerdings sind die oft sehr karge Belohnung und die herbe Kritik und Verdriesslichkeiten, die er erntet, wenig geeignet, ihn rösig zu stimmen. Er hat das erste und schwerste Opfer für die heilige Sache zu bringen. Dieses muss er in Begeisterung und Freudigkeit, nicht mit Missmuth bringen. Ihm gelte der Wahlspruch des ehrw. Joseph Fux: "Auf dem Parnass thront nicht Pluto, sondern Appollo." Nicht Geldinteresse, sondern die Liebe zur edlen Sache muss ihn beseelen und ihn in unverwüthlicher Heiterkeit, Muth und Rüstigkeit erhalten.

Er vermeide Alles, was ihn alteriren könnte. "Kater" und "Affe" misstimmen und verwirren, jede Aufregung raubt die nöthige Sammlung und Besonnenheit.

Das wohlwollende und freundliche Wesen biete der Director seinen Sängern, die er als liebe Freunde und Mitgehilfen zur Erreichung eines so hohen Zieles schätzen soll, entgegen, wo er immer mit ihnen in Berührung kommt, besonders beim Eintritt in's Probeklokal. Vor Beginn des Unterrichtes schenke er ihnen eine freundliche Aufmerksamkeit und pflege eine anständige Unterhaltung. Gegenüber Frauenpersonen paare sich zu der schuldigen Höflichkeit auch die gemessene Rückhaltung, die ihm den Respekt erhält. Gegenüber Kindern ist väterliches Wohlwollen und Herablassung, verbunden mit männlichem Ernste sehr gewinnend, während auf die Herrn Achtung ohne Steifheit einen guten Eindruck macht. Eine sehr glückliche Gabe ist es für den Director, wenn er durch Humor bisweilen in anständiger Weise Heiterkeit erwecken kann. Ebenso wenn er es versteht in der freien Unterhaltung die Rede auf das kirchenmusikalische Gebiet zu

lenken und durch anziehende Mittheilungen das Interesse für die Sache zu fördern.

Wie Freundlichkeit, Leutseligkeit und Zuverlässigkeit einen gewinnenden und erfreuenden Eindruck macht, ebenso abstossend wirkt Unfreundlichkeit, mürrisches und zornmüthiges Wesen: wenn der Director den Sängern nicht die Ehre eines freundlichen Grusses anthut, sich vielleicht mit Etwas beschäftigt, um sie ignoriren zu können, oder gar sie seinen Unmuth und Despekt fühlen lässt.—Nie vergesse er sich so weit, dass er kränkende oder verachtende Ausdrücke fallen lässt, oder in der Aufregung Scheltworte über sie ergiesst. Die Folge hievon ist sehr oft die Austrittserklärung von Chormitgliedern. Der Director sei ein Mann von Charakter und Takt; er spende nicht bald überschwängliches Lob und gleich wieder unverdienten Tadel, mache sich nicht durch Schmeichelei und Kriecherei gemein, um gleich darauf wieder in arroganter Weise Derbheiten zu versetzen. Gar leicht kann er in den Fall kommen, wegen unkluger Reden und Handlungen Abbitte leisten zu müssen, oder Chormitglieder zu verlieren. Da Intriguen und Eifersucht gar gerne störrisch sich geltend machen wollen, ist Klugheit und Besonnenheit doppelt nothwendig. — Vernünftige Einwendungen und Beschwerden der Sänger nehme der Direktor in Ruhe entgegen, ja veranlasse dieselben in dieser Beziehung unbefangen zu sein, desto mehr wird er das Zutrauen gewinnen.

Gegenüber ungebührlichen Auftritten von Seite der Sänger ist Ernst und Festigkeit ohne Alteration am Platze. Wenn Mitglieder aus Unzufriedenheit, Eigendünkel oder irgend welchen unedlen Motiven den Austritt erklären, so nehme der Director dieses in aller Gelassenheit entgegen, ohne seine Verlegenheit erkennen zu geben, und lebe der tröstlichen Zuversicht, dass die Ausgetretenen gar bald sich wieder von dem Schiff der Kirche nach der Orgelpore sehnen, und bei gebotener Gelegenheit mit aller Bescheidenheit eintreten werden.

Was zur Annehmlichkeit der Proben viel beiträgt, das ist Ordnung und gute Disciplin. Ohne gute Disciplin in den Proben wird auf dem Orgelchor nie die nöthige Ruhe, Aufmerksamkeit und Sammlung hergestellt werden können. Der Director halte streng darauf, dass die Sänger zur festgesetzten Zeit in der Probe erscheinen, damit die Anwesenden nicht durch Warten auf Verspätete gelangweilt und missmüthig gemacht werden. Beginnt die Gesangsstunde, so sollen Sänger wissen, dass jede Privatconversation aufhöre, und alle Aufmerksamkeit auf die Instruction gerichtet sein soll. Die Sänger bleiben an den angewiesenen Plätzen in steter Bereitschaft die Bemerkungen des Directors entgegenzunehmen.

Im Laufe der Instruction lasse der Director seinen vollen und freudigen Eifer leuchten, um die Sänger anzuspornen und zu ermuthigen, drücke bisweilen denselben bei erprobtem Fleiss und glücklichen Erfolgen seine Freude und Anerkennung aus.—Wenn Schwierigkeiten in der Instruction eintreten, so sei der Director ein wahrer Job. Er darf nicht vergessen, dass Unbeholfenheit und Schwäche der Anlagen dem Schüler nicht können zur Schuld gerechnet werden, und dass sie nur durch Gelassenheit und Ausdauer zu überwinden sind. Durch Versteinerung der Sänger in Esel und Ochsen wird die Sache nur schlimmer: Perplexität hindert das geordnete, ruhige Denken und klares Auffassen, Bestürzung und Schrecken alteriren die Stimme, manchen das Auge unsicher und nehmen den Schwachen allen Muth und Freude. Wenn aber Fehler von Unachtsamkeit, Flatterhaftigkeit oder gar Böswilligkeit herrühren, darf ernste Mahnung und Zurechtweisung in wenigen aber bündigen Worten nicht fehlen. Das oft angewandte und wirksame Mittel, die Unarten im Gesang durch Nachahmen und Zerzerrung derselben zur Carrikatur zu zeichnen, muss mit Vorsicht angewendet werden und stets mit der Bemerkung begleitet sein, es geschehe das nicht um lächerlich zu machen, oder zu kränken, sondern nur dem Fehler die eigene Missgestalt im Spiegel zur Verbesserung vorzuhalten. Sehr wird der Sänger dem Director verbindlich sein, wenn er ihn im Falle, da er wegen unverschuldeten Fehlschüssen vor Andern beschämt dasteht, in Schutz nimmt, besonders gilt das bei Personen von Stand. Rügen und Mahnungen an einzelne Fehlende werden am Wirksamsten und Schonendsten nach der Probe unter vier Augen ertheilt. Kurz: Auch der Ernst muss ohne Härte sein.

Am Schlusse der Probe entlasse der Director seine Sänger mit einigen Worten der Ermunterung, Anerkennung und des Dankes.—Meine Herren! Es ist das besprochene Moment ausserordentlich wichtig. Wenn ich in Gemeinden, wo der Kirchengesang nicht prosperiren will, nach der Ursache hievon frage, so wird mir meist die Antwort: "der Organist hat keine Freude und Lust an der Sache," oder: "er kommt mit den Sängern nicht aus, er vertreibt sie durch seine Unklugheit und Derbheit u. s. w." Ich kenne manche in musikalischer Beziehung tüchtige Directoren, die durch ihre Unverständigkeit und Taktlosigkeit in der Leitung der Proben nicht blos alle Erfolge vereitelt, sondern auch ihre Existenz verwirkt haben. Wenn aber ein Director von Klugheit, Wohlwollen und Eifer geleitet ist, werden die Sänger ihm mit aller Liebe und Opferwilligkeit zugethan sein und sich jedesmal auf die Probe freuen und dieselbe mit neuer Begeisterung

verlassen. In diesem glücklichen Verhältnisse zwischen Director und Sänger, in der Annehmlichkeit der Proben liegt die erste Grundbedingung für das Gedeihen des Chorgesanges, und dieses wird ein sicheres sein, wenn

2. die Probe instructiv ist.

Eifrige Sänger wollen Etwas lernen, sie wollen mit Recht für ihre Mühen Erfolge sehen. Daher muss der Direktor auf alle Vortheile und Kunstgriffe bedacht sein, um seine Schüler auf eine möglichst hohe Stufe der Bildung zu bringen.

(Fortsetzung folgt.)

Towards Social Art. The Gregorian Plain-Chant.*

During a recent visit to Quarr Abbey, where the Benedictines of Solesmes, expelled from France by the congregation law, carry on their monastic life, I was deeply impressed by the ideal of beauty which is so intimately connected with their religious worship. Though my early education in a Benedictine school had predisposed me to appreciate it, it was only during my quiet and peaceful sojourn at Quarr that I was able to penetrate its profound significance.

It has been said, "Ugly walls are bad advisers." To lift up the soul, to prompt it to deep thoughts and high aspirations, it must be placed in surroundings whose noble harmony will cause its whole being to vibrate in unison. In an atmosphere made in the likeness of the Heavenly Jerusalem, where nothing could shock and whence all discords would be banished, even the germ of evil would wither and die. Beauty, according to an old definition, is only the splendor of truth, which revealing itself openly, shows itself to us as the real good, and wins our adhesion. If we are in tune with the Universe, this accord is the Beautiful, and thus we are within the True, that is to say, in the Good, these three principles being only one which resolves itself ultimately into the being of God. It is this thought which, manifesting itself from the childhood of the nations, has inclined them often to attribute to arts, and to music in particular, an exclusively religious mission. The more men are accustomed to beauty and to eurythmy, the nearer will they approach to perfection, and evil will be to them but a faulty rhythm, causing a sensation of pain. It might be interesting to speculate how far our modern world, pregnant of a new civilization, by its violent and dissonant contrasts and the inartistic necessities of industry and daily life, may be the cause of the deterioration of our

nerves and our morals. Hence we have taken up again today the idea of the educational value of art, pointed out by Plato; so true is it that, for twenty centuries, we have only been rethinking the philosophy of the Greeks. And it is rather curious to note, in the pagan spirit of Jacques-Dalcroze or Isadora Duncan, as well as in the Christian soul of the monks of Solesmes, at both ends of the human mind and athwart different dreams, the same tendency toward the eternal ideal.

The Benedictine life flowers on amidst surroundings whose calm, pure beauty, make it seem the vision of a Gothic painter, of an Angelico or a Dürer. From my writing table my eyes take in an Arcadian landscape. Broad meadows, carpeted with thick grass, stand out among the darker, harmoniously distributed, masses of the woods, offering noble prospects through the fields: one might be in a vast park. Everything is clothed in the universal green. There is not a spot that is not covered by this luxuriant vegetation, which makes of the Isle of Wight, as of the whole of England, a poem of greenery. Above the undulations of the land, in the bluish backgrounds, rises, faint and misty, the soft, curved outline of the hills, recalling, on a paler sky, the grace of the French landscapes. Birds sing in the tranquil garden and the perfume of the woods ascends through the open window. On the other side of the house, the trees slope down to the sea, which is bounded by white sunlit beaches and the blurred outline of Portsmouth. The monks have not lost the secret of erecting their abodes in the places where God reveals Himself by the marvels of His creation. The Abbey itself, though one may dislike the details, has, on the whole, a character with which our commonplace houses cannot compete. Life is hard there, the rooms bare, the furniture primitive, the dress simple, but nothing is vulgar; and the pomp of the ritual and its ceremonies, which paraphrase throughout the year the moving poem of the liturgy, the sublime greatness of the psalms repeated daily, with the admirable musical adaptation of Plain-chant, make up the distinctive and artistic atmosphere that the monks breathe.

An existence permeated to such an extent by art would be irreconcilable with the ideal of monastic life, were its attraction merely picturesque, and were it not profoundly austere, pure, and serene. Thus, in Quarr all is beautiful but serious, nothing dissipates. The vaults and the walls are of bare and cold brick, and the eye, of which no gracious or charming fancy distracts the attention, meets only the great, severe lines of the early Ogival structure: one gets beauty and escapes sensuality.

*From "The Ecclesiastical Review," September, 1916. Philadelphia, Pa.

With a marvelous intuition, the whole disposition of the life has been made to converge toward its aim, contemplation; and Gothic art, with its flight toward the spiritual, spurning matter, is the expression most in harmony with the spirit of religion.

I have just indicated the qualities of Plain-chant, and the reason why the hearer, accustomed to the more skilful, conventional and sensuous music of the modern, feels at first somewhat confused.

Three chief points distinguish it from contemporary technique and define it. The diatonic style suited it because of its nobleness and firmness; it made its own, leaving aside the chromatic and enharmonic styles whose looseness was inconsistent with the purity of its conception. You never find accidentals in the key, neither sharps nor flats, dissolvent and troubling elements which the profane art uses so freely in the translation of the emotions of the heart and the disorder of the feelings. The diatonic style is the most natural, being the only one that may be used without changing the tune; it remains the same all through. The Gregorian song appears to us as something perfectly beautiful, perfectly pure; one hears nothing that is not correct and clear, tranquil, calm and vigorous, impersonal and almost superhuman. Lofty, heavenly music, calming the charm and the allurements of the senses, and recalling, as opposed to our more dramatized and voluptuous art, the Olympic ideal, impassible and plastic, of the Hellenic sculpture.

The melody runs its course without shocks; it does not hurry, nor delay, and chiefly it proceeds by almost equal notes, from which it derives perhaps its most exquisite sweetness. It must be noticed, indeed, that the primary tense does not divide, as in secular music; the note has for every tune a regular value, which, however, does not determine with a mathematical rigor the length of the sound. The supple and free rhythm will adapt itself to the nature of the words. And it is thanks to that uniformity, devoid of all stiffness, that the Roman cantilena owes, to a great extent, its calm, a little stern but never hard, its charm and its suavity. "It must not be inferred from this that all the notes are equal. In fact, if the primary tense does not divide, it may double or treble. Just as in a canvas embroidery, the same color of wool or silk may extend on more than one point, so on the canvas of the primary tenses, a same note may encompass two, three or four points in order to form the most agreeable melodic designs."¹

The note which, in the recitative, always lasts one syllable will in this way keep on a vowel and continue its sound. Long phrases, slowly modulated, vocalized, will twist round a syllable. "The song is now bright like the light that falls from the white glass, then gloomy like the dark patch of the black capes in the stalls." There are upwardsoarings in the light, then falls, and the humiliated and wounded soul rises again and implores. It is the highest possible expression of love, adoring, beseeching, and thanking its God. "There are no *traits*, insipid *roulades*; these vocalizes remain expressive, because always they are slow. Each note that composes them, remaining distinct, keeps its own value and its own beauty." Certain anthems, with queerly flowered melodic lines, seem to have been traced by the same hand that carved a cathedral's capital.

Finally, the absence of polyphony achieves the absolute simplicity, the perfect unity, the sober and virile majesty of this art, which is only a melody whose slender thread intertwines with the words without ever much deviating from the normal tone, and under which one always feels, quite near, the recitative, of which this music is the first and most antique transformation. "No doubt, at first the recitation only was known, the *recto tono* psalmody, that is to say, on one single note. To this, little by little, other notes added themselves, either to announce the verse—and this became the intonation—or to end it—and this became the cadence." Thus the melody was born; and so we come, with Plain-chant, at the origins themselves of music.

At Vespers, the monks, facing one another in the stalls on both sides of the choir, sing the psalms, each side alternately and answering the other, verse for verse, on a regular and clear rhythm, which scans the sacred canticles and gives them a movement animated and grave at the same time, setting off the force and the male sublimity of their inspiration. I remember a Kyrie of archaic style and probably of Greek origin, and a Pater of strange and exceptional beauty. "There is no melody in it, not even a melopoeia; just an intonation, equally restricted, if not more, than that of the Preface; a cadence as periodical but more melancholic," a supplication so near to abandonment, which remains nevertheless dignified and steady, with a manly, energetic accent, a song as sublime as it has been given to man to form in his mortal life.

The organ itself, sustaining discreetly the singers in unison, is but a concession to the failings of the voice, sole reigning here. All sing in unison, and it is from these indefinitely numerous voices, which redouble and multiply it, that the strength of the Plain-chant chiefly

¹ L'art grégorien, son but, ses procédés, ses caractères, lecture delivered at the Institut Catholique of Paris, in 1897, by Dom Mocquereau.

comes. Mr. Camille Bellaigue, in a very fine article on the Gregorian chant at Solesmes,² from which I have already quoted, says: "I would not have thought it possible for so many voices to be one voice. Never did one of them outrun the others; never did one loiter after the others. Thus univocal in duration, it was by its quality chiefly that this voice was unique: composed of all tones, no particular tone could be selected in it." I have heard, at the neighboring convent of St. Cecily, the psalmody of the nuns. Some voices are wonderfully pure and beautiful, but the effect is preferable by the men whose graver and less fragile voice-tone suits better with the severe and primitive grandeur of the Plain-chant. Perhaps the ideal would be to get both sexes singing together, as when a mixed congregation sings in church, uniting thus sweetness and force, and summing-up the moral character of that music.

I have dwelt so far on its intrinsic beauty only; it is increased by its perfect adaptation to religion and the religious life, which it is designed to serve. If one considers that the monks perform the Office five times a day, and that therefore their whole life is permeated by it, one is able to realize the powerful magnetism that the virtue of this art exercises on them. Gothic is a supreme sedative. Imagine them absorbing every day the same quantity of modern music, shaken for many hours by the storming enthusiasms of Beethoven or the dissolving sadness of Chopin: conventual life would be impossible for them. On the contrary, bathed in the quiet and euphonic outpouring of the Gregorian monody, the mind, of which nothing disturbs the calm nor distracts the attention, enjoys that peace which the Benedictine Order has chosen as its motto, and can devote itself entirely to contemplation. Enforced by the collective contagion of unison which, uniting men in the same prayer, in the same words, so that they are finally but one voice and one heart, multiplies the individual forces, the ideal of robust healthiness and moral equilibrium for which this melody stands, will impress itself on the bodies as well as on the souls, harmoniously develop the whole man, lift up their hearts and cultivate in them the sense of beauty and of good. From that same principle which is commonly expressed by the French proverb: "*La musique adoucit les moeurs*," and is put into practice by the snake-charmers, depend the modern systems of education by dance or by rhythmic gymnastics. "Just as the profane songs," says St. Augustine, "provoke naturally the rhythmic movements of the body which are called dance, so the singing of hymns sets in motion the spiritual faculties of our soul and

brings into being the harmonic play of virtues whose fruit is the amendment of morality and the final chord sanctity." Thus we pass from the natural sphere into the spiritual, where sacred music is also a powerful means of perfection.

Exalted, refined, transformed already by art, the monks will feel inclined toward higher and more holy thoughts, their prayer will be easier and more fervent; the beauty of the chant will render the prayer more agreeable and penetrating, for song expresses the feelings with more force than simple speech. Then the quality of the music, appeasing the soul and leading it toward contemplation, soothing it and preparing it for the love of God, enables one to pray better. And finally, since everything is connected, to create beauty and love it, as the Benedictines well know, are only different ways of praying. "Let our praise be fine so that it may please the Almighty." Plain-song, by increasing the religious sense, introduces to God. And therefore we find that the Scripture as well as the Fathers frequently counsel the practice of holy hymnody, on the wings of which we are borne aloft into the presence of the Eternal. "There are certain Intros, says the learned Father whose conversations have made me think on that subject further than I ever had thought, "that of Easter, for instance, which not even the least musical monk could sing five times without being completely turned inside out, even from the spiritual point of view." So it is that the Benedictines have no other apostolate than that of the liturgy; they do not argue with people, they simply ask them to attend the office. And they are right when they think that the surest way of entering the soul and leading it to God, is to appeal not to the reason, which, while it can discuss faith, cannot create it, but rather to the heart from which emanate both the artistic and the religious emotions.

Gregorian chant has only one object: public prayer. It has been said, Plain-chant is pre-eminently the music of religion; but not all religious music is Plain-chant; there are sacred masterpieces whose place is not in church. In the church, on the contrary, is the place of the Gregorian chant, and alone perhaps is it there thoroughly in the right place. It is because alone it is entirely adapted to the religious spirit; it is, so to speak, the voice of the cathedral, which is a symphony fashioned out of stones. The more recent music, even Palestrina's polyphony, is in the same relation to Plain-chant as the Basilica of St. Peter's is to the Ste. Chapelle, as a Madonna of Raphael or a statue of Bernini are, in spite of the ele-

² *Les Epoques de la Musique*. Vol. I, Paris, Delagrave.

³ Quoted by Dom Laurent Janssens in an address delivered at Namur, "*Le Chant Sacré d'après St. Thomas*," *Revue Bénédictine*, 1893, Vol. X, p. 213.

gance and skill of their technique, to the works of Fra Filippo and Memling, more naive, more stiff, less pleasing to the senses because of the poverty and clumsiness of their means, but how much more profound, immaterial and ethereal in character, more glowing with spiritual life, passionate and burning with love, but of a love free from any taint of voluptuousness. The intellect of the Renaissance has its greatness, but, because it savors too strongly of profane graces and pagan sensuality, it has not the mystic sense. Gothic art alone, its painting and its music, the expression of the Catholic Middle Ages, are in perfect harmony with the mystic spirit of religion.

The Gregorian song, reestablished by Dom Pothier and Dom Mocquereau, is the best musical form of prayer, like the liturgy, restored by Dom Gueranger, is its most excellent verbal form. The restoration of the melodies followed that of the texts; and the Benedictine order became thus the initiator of the movement which in these latter years has brought back the cult to the sound Roman traditions, and which was formulated in the reforms of the last Pontificate.

Because it is vocal before all things, because it is only chant, the Gregorian art is convenient for public prayer. It seems, in fact, as Mr. Bellaigue has noted, that the song of the human voice constitutes the music which is most free from fiction and artifice, the music in which the least matter mixes with speech to weigh it down, to restrain or to alter it.

Because it is verbal it suits the sacred words. The melody merely follows and embraces, so to speak, the literary phrase; it shapes really the discourse and sets it off; and at the same time no music is more respectful to the text, more supple and more sensible of its value. "Sometimes it presses, without ever disfiguring, sometimes, without stifling anything, it envelops; sometimes it slides and, as in play, it passes on. One would not think that the words were *set to music*, but that the music had sprung out of the words themselves, in which it was potentially contained." The Latin accentuation is particularly convenient for this technique, based as it is wholly on the accent. And even the Latin pronunciation introduced by Dom Gueranger in the Benedictine office adds to its grace and harmony. Like the melody, the rhythm, far from hindering or restraining it, moulds the text and corresponds to its diverse movements; free and easy rhythm, which gets as near as possible to nature, like that of prose, as opposed to the regular, artificial and conventional measures of poetry, to which the *isochrone* system of the modern musicians, with its fixed rhythms, might well be compared. Very re-

gardful of the text, the melody can, if necessary, disengage itself from it, continue a syllable by vocalizes, in which the Gregorian *melisme* takes delicious opportunities. And we find, in this skilful combination of two elements, by which far from one being sacrificed to the other, the effect of both is on the contrary increased, a solution to the always agitated problem of the alliance of music and words.

No art could be more suitable for the expression of the feelings of the soul toward its Creator than music, which speaks to the heart rather than to the intelligence. But such music had to be simple, sober, strong and sweet at the same time, purged of terrestrial passions and keeping in the heart the calm, the serenity of divine contemplation. We have seen how the Gregorian technique fulfils these conditions, and none could fulfil them better. Its antiquity enhances its religious character. Contemporary with what it sings, this mode of expression was originated at the same time as the order of ideas and of feelings that it expresses; it may be born in the same countries as Christianity. Something of the East is to be found in the melodies gathered by St. Gregory among the Greek Canticles and those of Judæa, works of unknown masters, collections of popular creations, it may be, whose birth has so far remained mysterious. "An Hebraic origin, or at least an Hebraic influence is not improbable here. The ecclesiastical chants and those of the East are often similar in the intonation or the cadence, in the fancy and the caprice of the melisms and the vocalizes, principally in these modes, which seem so strange to us and regulate alike the psalmody of a monk and the cantilena that the Arab breathes on his reed flute."

The monks to whom Plain-chant is so marvelously suited are thus also those who can interpret it best. Their simple, esthetic, chaste, and pious life, devoted to the contemplation of the eternal things, refines them, gives them an exceptional delicacy of feeling and renders them more apt to seize the gradations of these melodies, their signification, and as it were their preternatural soul; and the melodies, in return, continue to elate them. It is an incessant and progressive aspiration toward perfection. And indeed how they sing! It is their whole life that sings, and their song is their whole life being, their whole prayer. Never was art more living, because never was it more sincere, natural and true, more deeply human. "Men's nostra concordet voci nostræ"—let us put our hearts in unison with our voices, say the Benedictines. This music expresses with-

* C. Bellaigue.

out artificial means which stifle natural spontaneity, what is at the bottom of their hearts; and that is why they understand it so well, why they really live it and why, when they sing, it is with their whole soul. Anticipating the future life, the sacred praises which constitute the object of their existence and their true work—*opus Dei*, the divine work—are for them the beginning of the never-ending canticle.

The chosen choir of the monks, is the image of a universal choir. "Certain Kyrie, certain Sanctus," says again Mr. Bellaigue, "admirable at Solesmes, would be sublime under the vaults of Paris or Chartres, intoned by thousands of voices." There lies the essence of Plain-song, in its profound and fecund significance as a social art. The melody is sometimes individual and egoistic; it was so in Italy, in the years of reaction against Palestrina's polyphony, when the virtuosités of the *bel-canto* were all-powerful; but if well understood, it is, undoubtedly, more than polyphony, capable of expressing unity, and of creating it.

The Gregorian monody is intended to be executed in unison by all the assistants, a thing which the popular simplicity of its technique renders easy. The cantors, or a schola of chosen voices, may give the tone, sing the more difficult parts and support the general choir; but this latter always forms the basis and the essential element. Thus the people, by joining in the singing, will really participate in the office. During these few days spent at Quarr, never did the prayers seem tedious to me; this, because I was not a stranger merely witnessing a performance which he does not understand, and in which therefore he can take no interest. I was bearing an effective part in the ceremonies, acting by prayer and song, and so their pure beauty became living and intelligible to me. For art—and religion—only remain true, living and pregnant, so far as they remain in communion with men; and love, which is the first point in ethics, is also the first in esthetics. This is better known today, now that it has been seen how misleading was an egoistic art, cutting itself off from common life in a scornful exclusiveness, incapable of sympathy and comprehension.

That was a corollary to the individualism and the anarchic situation of the last century, being a consequence of the French Revolution and throwing its furthest roots as far as the Renaissance. Now a movement of reaction has appeared; the time of absolute liberty seems closed; and the new century prefers discipline and collective organization of the whole of society. It has taken as its motto that of Belgium: "In Union is Strength." One of the results of the present War, and of its deepest significations may well be to show to the world the power of

an organized body, with also its faults and its dangers, when this coördination goes as far as deformation by excessively specializing individuals, so that they merely become parts of a machine instead of human beings working together. In all domains there is a tendency toward authority, order, unity. Young people are royalists, nationalists, Catholics; the Trade Unions restore in a democratic state the medieval corporations; new theories, as Jules Romain's *Unanimism*, preach association which, uniting the whole groups in the same emotions, multiplies the value of the individual feeling by all the power of collectivity.

And attempts are made toward social art. It is for instance the Theatre of the People, to which Romain Rolland and Maurice Pottecher in France, have attached their names. To renew dramatic art by making it draw from the fecund sources of popular sap; to put it to the level of the crowd—and that will render it more natural and true; to unite the crowd to the performance, making it participate in the song or the action as in the feasts of May in the country or the grand political shows of which the French Revolution has given us the image and in which a whole people is acting; to create a new art, expression of a new social order; and it is just because it will express it that it will be living, that the crowd will understand it and be educated by it.

Such may be the ideal of Plain-chant. Attracted by an art which, equally averted from fastidious conventions and insipid devotion, remains natural and true, gained over to it by the contagion of example and the collective force that emanates from it, men will insensibly feel this wholesome and mysterious pressure of which we have already seen the results on the monks. And naturally, from the church, art will radiate on the outside, and following the noble and fruitful ideas which Ruskin had the glory to promote, continue its educational influence by enthroning beauty in the street, in the factory, at home, everywhere in daily life. Then if, thanks to a more reasonable distribution of labor, the workman, being not overtired and underpaid, can spare some time at the end of his day to cultivate the flower of beauty whose germs are in the heart of every human being, then we may foresee, without being charged with Utopianism, a return to the magnificent flowering of the Middle Ages. In those days, when art was entertained by the collective professional groupings, so that the artisan was not isolated but supported by his corps, his ideas being reinforced and fixed by a sympathetic milieu, it was poured on the whole people closely in touch with it. They understood art and so from among the people arose artists unnumbered. (To be continued.)

